

## MEDICAID COVERAGE AVAILABLE FOR MORE ND CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

BISMARCK – Governor John Hoeven announced that some middle income families will soon be able to access comprehensive health coverage for their disabled children [sic] through the North Dakota Medicaid program. The new “buy-in” program is available April 1, 2008.

The program is intended to improve health care for children who are considered disabled under the Social Security Act, and may benefit several hundred North Dakota children. According to the North Dakota Department of Human Services' Medicaid Director Maggie Anderson, to qualify a family's net income cannot exceed 200 percent of the federal poverty level (or \$3,533/month for a family of four).

Qualifying families will pay a monthly premium.

Donene Feist, an advocate and state director of Family Voices of North Dakota said, "North Dakota's Children with Disabilities Coverage program was the first in the country to be passed because families, agencies, and state policy makers worked together to find a solution. This moves us forward in the right direction and away from financial ruin due to medical debt."

Families of children with disabilities can apply for coverage at their county social service office. Families will need to bring proof of citizenship and identity such as birth

Continued on Next Page.....



Adam W. Hamm  
Insurance Commissioner

### Welcome to the RxConnector Newsletter!

Dear Friends,

*This newsletter is designed to keep you up to date about the Prescription Connection for ND program and to keep you in the know about the various prescription assistance programs that are available. In addition, from time to time, we may also include other items of interest related to Medicare and the State Health Insurance Counseling (SHIC) program.*

*As always, thank you so much for all that you do for the Prescription Connection program! Without your help, our work would be that much harder. Your efforts are valued and appreciated!*

*If you have items of interest that you think should be included in this newsletter, we'd like to hear about them! Please contact Sharon St. Aubin by email at [sstaubin@nd.gov](mailto:sstaubin@nd.gov) or call her toll free at 888.575.6611.*

Sincerely,

Adam W. Hamm  
Insurance Commissioner

**Contact the  
Department:**

**1.888.575.6611**  
**[insurance@nd.gov](mailto:insurance@nd.gov)**  
**[www.nd.gov/ndins](http://www.nd.gov/ndins)**

**NORTH  
DAKOTA**  
a program of the  
North Dakota  
Insurance Department

**Prescription  
Connection**  
*for North Dakota*

certificates, approved photo identification, and social security numbers, as well as proof of income such as paycheck stubs or tax forms.

Family Voices can be reached at 1-888-522-9654.

Families who wish to apply for the health coverage can complete the [Application for Health Care Coverage](#): State Form Number (SFN) 502.

Families who want to apply for Medicaid coverage along with economic assistance programs should complete an [Application for Assistance](#) (SFN 405). Feist said Family Voices of North Dakota can help families complete the Medicaid application process.



## NEW APPROACH FOR PROMOTION OF HIV SCREENINGS

Today, hip-hop artist and actor Common, in collaboration with *It's Your (Sex) Life*, a public information partnership between the Kaiser Family Foundation and MTV, and the Common Ground Foundation, with support from Youth Speaks, is launching "A Minute" – a new lyrics contest to encourage young people to get tested for HIV. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends routine HIV screening for all adults and adolescents (ages 13-64) in the United States. Through this new initiative, Common, MTV and Kaiser are encouraging young people to take a minute to inform themselves and others about HIV testing.

The competition kicks off today on MTV's TRL (Total Request Live) and is intended to engage and inspire young people across the country to learn more about HIV and the importance of knowing your HIV status. The CDC estimates that among the more than one million people living with HIV/AIDS in the United States, approximately 1 in 4 do not know they are infected with the virus. The "A Minute" contest offers young people the opportunity to submit an original poem, lyrics, or writing that addresses why getting tested for HIV is important. The winning entry will be performed by Common in a special public service announcement (PSA) that will premiere on National HIV Testing Day (June 27, 2008) and air throughout the summer on MTV2 and mtvU, MTV's college network, as well as be available on demand at [www.itsyoursexlife.com](http://www.itsyoursexlife.com). To learn more about the contest or apply, visit [www.itsyoursexlife.com](http://www.itsyoursexlife.com) or [www.aminutecontest.com](http://www.aminutecontest.com).

Competition details:

- Write original lyrics (can be spoken word, poetry, reggae, indie...any musical voice that best represents your message).
- Entries must be one minute or less when performed.
- Entries must be submitted by March 27, 2008 and can be submitted in text, audio or video form. (Please include text with any audio or video entries.)

"This is a great opportunity for young people to speak directly to their peers about such a critical issue," said James Kass, Founder and Executive Director of Youth Speaks. "By speaking creatively about getting tested, youth can educate each other without preaching. That's what people respond to."

To learn more about the competition, visit [www.itsyoursexlife.com](http://www.itsyoursexlife.com) or [www.aminutecontest.com](http://www.aminutecontest.com).

## FAMILY WIZE CARDS AVAILABLE

These cards are being distributed free of charge nationwide by the Family Wize Partnership and participating United Way agencies, county agencies, community and faith-based organizations, doctors, businesses, and some pharmacies. Discounts are provided by and available only at the participating pharmacies.

An example of the savings this card provides is purchasing the medication Flurazepam. The beneficiary who used the card only paid 1/3 of the retail price at the pharmacy. This card is a great asset when no other help is available.

## AVASTIN APPROVED FOR TREATMENT OF BREAST CANCER

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has granted accelerated approval for Avastin in combination with paclitaxel chemotherapy for treatment of breast cancer.

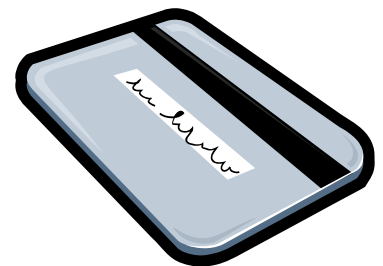
Genentech Inc. said the treatment is designed for patients with metastatic HER2-negative breast cancer who have not received chemotherapy.

The Genentech Access to Care Foundation provides Avastin to those who qualify. The Genentech program can be accessed by calling 1-800-530-3083. The program address is 1 DNA Way, Mail Stop, 210 South, San Francisco, CA 94080.

## PRESCRIPTION DRUG CARD FOR NON-CITIZENS

The drug card that works for non-citizens is Sun Patient Card.

Call 800-777-1023 to obtain more information. This company does not require



## MORE FENTANYL PATCHES RECALLED

WASHINGTON - Patches containing the prescription painkiller fentanyl were recalled for the second time in a week, because of a flaw that could cause patients or caregivers to overdose on the potent drug inside.

Sold in the United States by Actavis South Atlantic LLC, the newly recalled patches have both this name and the company's former name, Abrika Pharmaceuticals Inc., on their packaging. The old name is on the pouches that contain the patches and the new name is on the outer carton.

PriCara, a division of Johnson & Johnson, announced a recall of fentanyl patches manufactured by its affiliate ALZA Corp.

The recall includes 25-microgram-per-hour, 50-microgram-per-hour, 75

Continued on Next Page.....

microgram-per-hour and 100 microgram-per-hour patches with expiration dates of May through August 2009.

Some of the patches may have a defect that can cause them to leak, putting patients and caregivers at risk of coming into direct contact with the powerful "opioid" drug inside. This could result in difficulty breathing and a potentially fatal overdose.

## INVITATION TO THE 5TH ANNUAL ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY EXPO IN FARGO

The 5th Annual Assistive Technology Expo will be in Fargo on April 10, 2008, at the Ramada Plaza Suites! Learn more about Assistive Technology (AT) and how it can help you or someone you know.

### PRESENTATIONS:

Concurrent assistive technology sessions, which will focus on many different AT topics, will be offered during the morning of the Expo from 8-12N.

### EXHIBIT HALL:

From 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., the AT Expo Exhibit Hall will showcase assistive technology.

### SHRINERS FREE ORTHOPAEDIC CARE CLINIC:

This clinic will be at the Ramada Plaza Suites, down the hall from the AT Exhibit Hall, the afternoon of the Expo. Call for more details.

### FREE POPCORN & A MOVIE:

The movie, "Freedom Machines," will be shown several times throughout the afternoon of the Expo at no cost. According to PBS, where the film premiered, "Freedom Machines" takes a new look at disability through the lens of assistive technology. The experiences of a group of unforgettable people let us re-examine ideas about ability and disability grounded in our culture and attitudes. ([www.pbs.org/pov/pov2004/freedommachines](http://www.pbs.org/pov/pov2004/freedommachines))



### COST:

The concurrent AT sessions in the morning are \$20, with lunch included, if registered by April 3, 2008.

### SCHOLARSHIPS:

Scholarships are available on a first-come, first-serve [sic] basis to individuals with disabilities to cover the admission fee for the morning presentations.

The exhibit hall is FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC!

For further information and registration forms, contact Jenifer Swetland or Jeannie Krull at 1-800-895-4728 E-mail [jswetland@ndipat.org](mailto:jswetland@ndipat.org) or [jmkrull@ndipat.org](mailto:jmkrull@ndipat.org) OR Please visit <http://www.ndipat.org/newsevents/default.asp?ID=379>.

# SOCIAL SECURITY SAYS DISABILITY IS THE AGENCY'S MOST PRESSING CHALLENGE

Each year, approximately 2.5 million people apply for Social Security (SS) disability benefits. On average, one-third of them are approved upon initial application, which takes an average of three months for a decision. But for those who are denied and appeal the decision to the hearing level, it can take a long time to receive a decision. Right now, there are more than 750,000 cases waiting for a hearing and the average time to get a hearing decision is 499 days. Pending hearings have doubled since 2001. In addition, the number of applications for disability benefits has been extraordinarily high throughout the last seven years and expect it to be even higher in the coming years.

Social Security's disability programs have grown significantly over the last seven years and will continue to do so at an increasing rate as aging baby boomers reach their most disability-prone years. At the same time, Congress has added new and non-traditional workloads to Social Security's responsibilities. As a result, the agency is struggling to balance those new responsibilities with its core workloads under tight resource constraints.

These new initiatives will eliminate the hearings backlog and prevent it from recurring. Here are just a few examples. The first is the **Quick Disability Determination (QDD)**, a process based on a computer model that allows SS to screen cases with a high potential for approval. The QDD process has proved highly successful in the Boston region, and the average processing time now is just 8 days. On September 5, 2007, the agency issued a final rule extending QDD nationwide. By the end of this month, every state will be processing QDD cases and about 5% of all allowances will be handled through QDD.

**(Note: QDD started in ND during 10/2007 and in MN during 11/2007)**

The second, **Compassionate Allowances**, is a way of quickly identifying medical conditions that invariably qualify under their listings. In these cases, which are often rare diseases unfamiliar to reviewers, allowances will be made as soon as the diagnosis is confirmed. In December 2007, the first public hearings on this initiative were held and social security will hold three more hearings this year. You can learn more about compassionate allowances at [www.socialsecurity.gov/compassionateallowances](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/compassionateallowances).

In addition, Social Security has opened a **National Hearing Center (NHC)**. The NHC allows the agency to capitalize on new technologies such as electronic disability folders and video teleconferencing and gives needed flexibility to address the country's worst backlogs. Social Security is also hiring **175 new Administrative Law Judges (ALJs)**, the largest group of new ALJs ever hired by Social Security in a single year. These ALJs expect to be on board in the spring.

These are but a few of the many initiatives the agency has underway. When it comes to eliminating disability backlogs, there is no single magic bullet. To learn more about Social Security's plan to reduce the hearings backlog and improve service go to [www.socialsecurity.gov/](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/)

## PRODUCT RECALL ON ICY HOT HEAT THERAPY PRODUCTS

Chattem, Inc. recently announced a nationwide recall of its Icy Hot Heat Therapy products because of reports of burns and skin irritation. For more information, go to this web site:

[Icy Hot Heat Therapy Products Recalled](#)